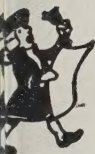


# Town Meeting



BULLETIN OF AMERICA'S TOWN MEETING OF THE AIR

Broadcast by 310 Stations of the ABC Radio Network



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## How Can We Meet the Challenge of Juvenile Delinquency?

Moderator, JAMES F. MURRAY, JR.

*S p e a k e r s*

ANNA M. KROSS

THOMAS C. HENNINGS



COMING

—February 9, 1954—

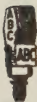
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# Town Meeting

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## How Can We Meet the Challenge of Juvenile Delinquency?



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The account of the meeting reported in this Bulletin was transcribed from recordings made of the actual broadcast and represents the exact content of the meeting as nearly as such mechanism permits. The publishers and printer are not responsible for the statements of the speakers or the points of views presented.

### THE SPEAKERS' COLUMN

**SENATOR THOMAS C. HENNINGS**—Member of Senate Judiciary's Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency. A Democrat from St. Louis, Missouri, Thomas C. Hennings, Jr., was born on June 25, 1903. He received his A.B. from Cornell University in 1924; his LL.B. from Washington University in 1926, and in that year was admitted to the Missouri Bar. He was an assistant circuit attorney in St. Louis from 1929 until 1934. Senator Hennings became a member of the House of Representatives representing the Eleventh Missouri District in the Seventy-fourth through the seventy-sixth Congresses. Retired in 1940 to become a candidate for circuit district attorney of St. Louis at request of St. Louis Bar Association Judicial Selection Committee, he was nominated without opposition and elected.

He interrupted his term of office as circuit district attorney to become a lieutenant commander in the United States Navy in 1941-44, and resumed his duties until 1945. He became a senior partner in Green, Hennings, Henry & Evans. He is a member of the Senate Judiciary's Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency, and is an honorary member of the St. Louis Big Brothers.

He was elected to the United States Senate on November 7, 1950, and has been the vice chairman of the Missouri Basin Survey Commission, and Secretary of the Senate Democratic Conference of the eighty-third Congress.

**JUDGE ANNA M. KROSS**—Commissioner of Correction, New York City. Magistrate Anna M. Kross can look back to a lifetime of service to the cause of humanity. Recital of all her achievements since her admission to the Bar in 1912 makes a long list. She has served the City continuously for over twenty years. First appointed Assistant Corporation Counsel to the Domestic Relations Court, she became Magistrate in 1934; on the Magistrate's Bench she has been in front line battle fighting against vice, crime, and juvenile delinquency.

Convinced that a majority of the problems in this Court are essentially

(Continued on page 15)

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# How Can We Meet the Challenge of Juvenile Delinquency?

## Announcer:

Tonight's Town Meeting originates from the auditorium of the "Y" building in Ridgewood, New Jersey, where our hosts are the members of Ridgewood's active YMCA. Presented in co-operation with the National Council of the Young Men's Christian Association, this broadcast is in salute to National YMCA Week, celebrated by more than 1700 Y branches throughout the country. With a membership of more than three and one-half million, the organization has kept step with the times, fulfilling the needs of youth, and building the physical, moral, and spiritual strength of young people of all races and creeds.

Under trained leadership, including thousands of volunteers who give their time in the service of youth, the Y provides a program of wholesome leisure-time activities for young boys, teen-agers and young adults. Therefore, it's fitting that this evening's Town Meeting is presented in behalf of National YMCA Week, and on a subject that is especially appropriate since it deals with young people.

And now to preside over our discussion, here is Town Meeting's moderator, Mr. James F. Murray, Jr. Mr. Murray.

## Moderator Murray:

The growth of juvenile delinquency in the United States during the past decade has assumed proportions which in the opinion of many are so alarming as to approach a national emergency. Rampant in every phase of our so-

ciety and in every corner of our nation, the spread of crime and waywardness among our teen-age children has engaged the most intensive efforts of churchmen, educators, social experts, and law enforcement agencies at every level of our life, from Main Street to Capitol Hill. So serious has the situation threatened to become that the Senate of the United States has established a special committee to investigate the problem and seek out, if they can, a solution to be found.

The catalogue of facts makes most unpleasant reading. In the past twenty years, for example, the number of murders committed by boys under the age of sixteen has risen 47 per cent. Arrests of youngsters from 16 to 20 years of age for violating the New York State narcotics law has increased 500 per cent from 1947 until 1950. From 1948 until 1952 juvenile delinquency across the nation, as a whole, has increased 29 per cent. Last year, an estimated 53 per cent of all burglaries in the United States were committed by persons under 18 years of age. More than one million of our children, and that means one out of 18 in America, fell into the hands of the police and 385 thousand of them were actually brought into court for one offense or another.

What has gone wrong? President Eisenhower has defined juvenile delinquency as parental failure. The FBI has cited lack of religion and inadequate recreational facilities among several contributing factors responsible. Parents and clergymen have complained



against the accent on crime and immorality in media available to boys and girls of school age. And some children themselves cite the variance in the moral standards between what is practiced by their elders and what is taught to them.

Whatever the causes, the problem of juvenile delinquency poses one of the most formidable challenges to face the people of America today. For tonight's discussion, originating from the beautiful auditorium of the new Y building in Ridgewood, New Jersey, America's Town Meeting presents two distinguished guests who will discuss this very vital topic. Our first speaker is Senator Thomas C. Hennings. Senator Hennings.

#### **Senator Hennings:**

I have always thought the term "juvenile delinquency" an inadequate descriptive phrase. I prefer to say "young people in trouble." This isn't a new problem. As a society, we have learned very much about its causes, its prevention, and how to change the course of a delinquent career. But when medical science discovered that the yellow fever germ was transmitted by mosquitoes, society benefited only as that knowledge led to the control of conditions affecting the transmission. Now the causes of our young people getting into trouble are, of course, multiple, and our knowledge of the causes of delinquency is still far from complete, but I do suggest that we have all too often failed to make use, and thereby to benefit from, the knowledge which we do have. Implicit in all of this is, of course, what we may call adult delinquency or adult inadequacy.

Parental neglect and inadequate home life are all too frequent factors in cases of young people who do get into trouble. We do

know, for example, something about the kind of laws which are needed to protect children, yet all too often we have failed to strengthen, modify, or add to existing statutes. We recognize the devastating effect of slum life upon our children, but we go on tolerating slums. We recognize the importance of sound and modern educational systems and all too often fail to provide adequate school facilities and to pay teachers' salaries which are necessary to make our school systems measure up to our requirements.

We know, too, that the pre-delinquent child, poised on the brink of serious difficulty, stands too frequently outside the stream of community services. We know, too, that this child is not reached by our recreational group work, mental health and social service agencies, and we must develop and adopt attitudes that will reach him. He will not come voluntarily to us for help and he is not consciously looking for this help. This, then, is the challenge, or part of it, as I see it. What is needed is a new and imaginative approach to the entire problem.

This is in no way a repudiation of former efforts that have been made; nor do I wish to imply that the thousands of dedicated people who are engaged in this work should relax their efforts until we find new answers. But I do wish to stress that juvenile delinquency is mounting, in so far as statistics and figures can be relied upon or trusted, at an alarming rate in our rural communities as well as in our crowded cities. To chart the course of action we should take to meet this challenge is the task that we of the Juvenile Delinquency Committee of the United States Senate are undertaking. We

need your help, the help of everybody, because this is everybody's business.

Plato, in his *Republic*, quoted Socrates as saying: "Our youth should be treated from the first in a stricter system, for if amusements become lawless, and the youth themselves become lawless, they can never grow up into well conducted and virtuous citizens." From that quotation, I think we may gather that even Athens, the purest of democracies, had its juvenile delinquency problem.

Juvenile delinquency today, as in antiquity, is a product of a host of society's ills. The greater and more acute these ills, the more aggravated becomes the juvenile delinquency and the youth problem. It is, in fact, in reality, a normal reaction to the manifold temptations which confront youth at a given moment in our social history. It is a reflection of youth striving to satisfy certain basic emotional, economic, and social needs. He strives to attain these needs by fair means or lawful means or by any means.

Now I do not want to leave the impression from these remarks that I, myself, or that we of the Senate committee, studying this complex problem of such great magnitude, condone the actions of any or all juvenile delinquents. We do not, but we are interested in causes, effects, and ways and means of reversing the trend. Over one million children in trouble this year! If the present trend continues, the number will reach one and one-half million by 1960. This is a national disgrace which we can't afford to do nothing about.

**Mr. Murray:** Thank you very much, Senator Hennings. Magistrate Anna M. Kross has served the city of New York contin-

uously for over twenty years. First appointed Assistant Corporation Counsel to the Domestic Relations Court, she became magistrate in 1934. She formed the magistrate court's Social Service Bureau in 1936 and later organized the wayward minor's court for girls from 16 to 21, which is now called "Girls Term," one of the first socialized courts in New York City to handle exclusively the problems of adolescent female delinquents.

In 1943 she was chairman of the Department of Crime, Delinquency, and Social Adjustment of the New York State Federation of Women's Clubs. Before her recent appointment as New York City's Commissioner of Correction, Judge Kross was magistrate of the Home Term Court, an experimental court exclusively handling family problems. Judge Anna M. Kross.

#### **Judge Kross:**

I'm very happy, indeed, at this opportunity to meet here with you tonight under these auspices, because in the years that I have attempted to find the answer to the problem of tonight: "How Can We Meet the Challenge of Juvenile Delinquency?" I have naturally turned to groups such as this—of every type and description. And it's encouraging to find an audience as vital as this and as interested as this facing this problem. But I believe that any definition of delinquency hardly presents the subject.

We lawyers, naturally, are bound by the statutes, we judges by the interpretations that higher courts give it. But for the lay person, it might be interesting and it might clarify the atmosphere if I just gave you a bird's-eye view of some of the things that go under the category of delinquency from



the recent publications of the study made under the United Nations auspices, a comparative survey on delinquency.

They list a category of some 34 situations that fall under the term of delinquency: "Violation of any law or ordinance; habitual truant; associates with thieves, vicious or immoral persons; incorrigible; beyond control of parents or guardians; growing up in idleness or crime; so disport self as to injure or endanger self or others; absent self from home without consent; immoral and indecent conduct; habitually uses vile, obscene or vulgar language in public places; knowingly enters, visits policy shops or gaming shops; patronizes, visits, habitually wanders about the railroad tracks or yards; jumps trains or enters cars or engines; patronizes saloons or houses where intoxicating liquor is sold; wanders streets at night not on lawful business; patronizes public pool rooms or bucket shops; immoral conduct around the school or in public places; engages in illegal occupations; smokes cigarettes; frequents places, the existence of which is in violation of the law."

Just imagine anything as broad as that! "Is found in places for permitting which adults are punished." I could go on through the entire list, and it is about that vague. Now when you realize that the violation of any one of these vague statements incorporated in the law, that we all agree is vague, constitutes delinquency, you see that juvenile delinquency becomes an indefinable problem. But I think what is important is to understand its roots, and if you analyze any one of the statutes in any one of our states or territories, you will find that we have skirted the problem; we have never at-

tempted to define the causative factors in order to understand it.

**Mr. Murray:** Commissioner Kross, this might be a good point to interject, exactly in line with your statement, a question which was on the minds of many of our radio listeners when they wrote in during the past week: "Precisely why is the average age level of our criminals getting lower during the years which have just passed?"

**Judge Kross:** Well, you might be interested in what my own reason is, what I consider the fundamental basic factor, and probably many of you will agree with me and many may differ. The family unit, to my mind, is the key to the successful handling of the delinquent child and the youthful offender. It was the courts' move to take the child out of the criminal court and place him in what we call a "cure" court, created to deal especially with him, the youthful offender. The cure of the child was accomplished, but as these courts went about their work, the child emerged not as an isolated being, but as a part of the total picture which is his family.

I have come to the conclusion from my own experience that that was where our weakness was in the past three to four decades, that we concentrated on the child without recognizing that that child came from a family and it wasn't a question of privileged or underprivileged, because recently we are learning that a good deal of this incidence of juvenile delinquency, and its increase, comes from overprivileged families or better privileged families rather than the underprivileged.

**Mr. Murray:** Senator, do your views concur with those of Commissioner Kross?

**Senator Hennings:** I think there is not any question about the soundness of Commissioner Kross's expressions. On one phase of this problem I would like to observe, and I am sure that the Commissioner has already indicated this to be her view of it, that this problem is so vastly complex as to admit of no easy answers. There isn't any golden specific; there isn't any panacea; this is as varied in its facets as humanity and human life itself; and we of this committee do not expect to find a cure.

We do hope by these hearings which we are having throughout the country, some of which started in November, to begin to awaken the citizens, by and large, to the size of this problem, its dimensions, and to bring to bear not only the expert and specially trained minds and social services, but to bring public opinion to bear, because we can learn from the people more than this committee can ever teach the people. And we are all confronted by this problem, most all of us.

**Mr. Murray:** Senator, we do realize, of course, that your committee is still engaged in its work and that no report has been prepared, but I think our listening audience should know, too, that you have had a greater portion of your life dedicated to juvenile welfare. And I wonder in the light of that if you and Judge Kross could form an opinion as to precisely what may be the relation between the general ills of our society today, in the world in which we live and its tensions, and the problem of increasing juvenile delinquency. Senator Hennings?

**Senator Hennings:** Well, I would say that there is doubtless a very definite relationship between juve-

nile delinquency and the kind of world in which we live today. In the past fifty years we have gone through two world wars, and we have lately been in a cold war of uncertain termination. This is beyond question a factor which creates anxieties, tensions, and frustrations in older people as well as in the youngsters.

And while we can't, in terms of our trying to alleviate this problem or to do something about it, say that everything is attributable to world conditions, because we have always had crime; we have always had young people violating laws, but we do hope to come to some conclusions as to a method or means of partial alleviation of these ills that beset not only humanity in our country but all over the world.

**Mr. Murray:** Commissioner Kross, some of our parent groups have complained that the youngsters are exposed in this generation, I should say overly exposed, to media depicting or glorifying crime with specific reference, I presume, to comic books and other such instruments which the youngsters now have. Do you feel, Commissioner, that that has any direct influence on the rise of juvenile delinquency?

**Judge Kross:** I don't believe there's anyone who can point to any *one* thing that has a direct influence on the rise of delinquency. I think one of our difficulties is that in our country we all think we are experts when we talk about crime; we fail to follow through, as the Senator so well began, the analogy between the manner in which we have handled, for instance, the science of medicine, or the manner in which we have developed our most magnificent resources in the other technical and scientific fields. We just all come



to snap judgment and do not follow through in any scientific manner.

For instance, in all the volume of studies that have been made in this area, there are so few that employ the scientific approach. The Gluecks in Boston recently did a study where for the first time they took 500 delinquents and compared them with 500 normal children of absolutely comparable status—social and economic—so that there couldn't be a variance, the controlled medium every scientist uses. And the most interesting thing that came out of that, the conclusion, was that many of the children that we imprint the stamp of delinquency on (when they are a little older, we imprint the stamp of crime on) have the same characteristics that produced, Senator, men like you and women like myself—the thing they call the aggressive fighting through, because they believed in the thing. Well now when you recognize . . .

**Senator Hennings:** Commissioner, may I interrupt you to say that we have the benefit there of the testimony of Professor Glueck, who is the husband, and Doctor Glueck, who is the wife. The husband is a professor in the Harvard University Law School and they came to our committee in Washington and, as you have indicated, gave us some very challenging and most interesting statistics and data. They have been living with this problem the greater part of their lives.

**Judge Kross:** Well, I think the important thing for us to recognize is that with all the money and efforts and good intentions that we have expended in the last fifty years, we have barely scratched the surface. But this is a problem that confronts us that we have to

face with the tools that are available, and there are very many available tools and very many available resources, but we have not yet implemented or integrated them so that they could function effectively, even in sufficient number of pilot experiments that would give us an opportunity to really say *A*, *B*, or *C* is the causative factor.

**Mr. Murray:** Well, Commissioner and Senator, do you feel that that integration could be more widely used, for example, in our schools and at the community level, or should it be imposed or initiated at a rather higher source? How do you feel about that, Senator?

**Senator Hennings:** Of course the schools are vastly important in the formative years of any group of children or any individual child. I sometimes think that we expect a little too much of the schools. Sometimes parents turn their children over to the teacher in the morning and see nothing of them until night, and assume that the teacher is a qualified sociologist, psychiatrist, coach of athletics and recreational activities, in addition to being a teacher of chemistry or English. I agree with the Commissioner that this is a local problem; certainly the unit where we begin is the home.

**Judge Kross:** Senator, I must take issue with you; you say we expect too much of the schools. I think we have a right to expect everything of the schools, but we must prepare the schools to be able to meet that responsibility. Our trouble is we blame parents; we say they are responsible, failing to recognize that there are very few parents who have been trained to meet the responsibility. Then we say we shouldn't charge the teacher with that responsibility.



True we have not equipped our teachers, but when we say teachers we don't mean the one teacher. We now have tools that should be placed within the school that would be the necessary tools for the teacher, just as we do not expect a doctor not to use the X-ray or a chemical analysis or the hundreds of different laboratory tests that are now available. We have never employed that type of doctor. What we need to do is to recognize that this is no longer a question of teaching our children the three R's; this is a question of teaching our children how to live in a complex society, if we are going to make our way of life prevail.

It's very simple if it's an authoritarian way where someone on top says, this is what you have to do or else. But, if our way of life is the democratic way of life, in which we want to give our children the opportunity to be able to face these problems, we've got to build the tools, and we have to begin in the schools to teach for family living, for parenthood, for responsibility. Then we might have the right to say someone is responsible.

**Senator Hennings:** Commissioner, I am in complete agreement with that, except that I am discussing schools as they are presently constituted and laboring under all the impediments that we know the schools throughout the country are having to contend with. That is to say: crowded classes to the point where the teacher sometimes handles as many as 100 children in two shifts during the day; schools where the facilities are obsolete and not in any wise calculated to give the children an opportunity to develop within the ideal environment, with which I

would agree we might be able to expect schools to do more.

**Mr. Murray:** Well, Senator and Commissioner, each week Town Meeting presents a handsome twenty-volume set of the American People's Encyclopedia to a listener who submits the most provocative and timely question pertinent to the subject under discussion. Tonight's question comes from Mr. Norman Precoda, of Schenectady, New York, and his question is: "What would be the effects of holding parents responsible and accountable for delinquency of their children?" Commissioner Kross, would you care to begin on that?

**Judge Kross:** I would. I can tell you from experience in some of the courts where that was tried—the effect was disastrous. It added to the tension of the parents and created an additional problem for the children, and it would seem to me that if we are going to face the problem of our young people, as the Senator so rightly said, we don't want to proceed in the way that adds to their problems. Just think of a boy or girl who has to come home with a father or mother that has paid a fine, say, for only ten dollars, where ten dollars might make a difference in the income level in that household.

**Mr. Murray:** Senator, what is your feeling on that?

**Senator Hennings:** Well, I am in complete agreement with the Commissioner on that, and we have had a good many witnesses before the committee who attest to the truth of that statement and of the great fallacy of holding the parents financially accountable for all the delinquencies of their children.

**Mr. Murray:** Well, Senator, thank you very much. In our audience

are many prominent officials of the YMCA, including Doctor J. A. Urice, General Secretary of the National Council, and we have now reached the point where our

listeners here in the Y auditorium will present their questions to our distinguished guests. First, the gentleman on my left. For whom is your question intended, please?

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## QUESTIONS, PLEASE!

*Questioner:* My question is intended for Senator Hennings. My name is Vivian C. McCollom, and I happen to be a businessman and a father, but primarily I ask this question as Chairman of the National Program Committee of the YMCA. What, in your judgment, Senator Hennings, is the one most important thing that an organization like the YMCA can do to combat juvenile delinquency?

*Senator Hennings:* Mr. McCollom, I have, of course, followed the work of the YMCA most of my life, and I should say that the problem of an agency such as the YMCA, the YWCA, the Boy Scouts and all comparable groups would be to reach more of the people who need to be reached. We sometimes have to go to these youngsters and to enlist their interest in a way that requires a most unusual and proficient sort of technique.

We had a boy before us, for example, who was working in New York with one of the New York gangs, and he pointed out that these boys don't want to get into things that somebody else has organized. The boys who are on the brink of trouble, who are in and out of the courts, and have, in fact, become young criminals in a sense, although I don't like the word criminals, most of them are pretty much like anybody else—

these boys seem to want to originate these things, and to participate in something that they themselves have created. I'm speaking of the boys that fine organizations such as the YMCA all too frequently don't reach.

*Mr. Murray:* Thank you very much, Senator. Next question, please, from the gentleman on my left.

*Questioner:* My question is directed to Judge Kross.

I would be very much interested, Judge Kross, in having you state more specifically the tools with which you think the public schools could help combat juvenile delinquency.

*Judge Kross:* I think every school in our country is entitled today to a first class set-up, known generally as a guidance clinic, with all the necessary tools—pyschiatrist, psychologist, pyschiatric social worker, vocational guidance worker, all the necessary techniques in testing—so that the teacher does not have to work in the dark with children of all levels and all emotional make-ups—and sufficient resources to understand and know the family. If a teacher doesn't know the background of the child, she is working in the dark.

It would seem to me that our country is rich enough to provide those tools for every single one

of our public schools, but I am sorry to say that even in our rich city of New York, our guidance department is totally lacking and can barely handle the children that are already in trouble. If we want to prevent them from getting into trouble, we have to look upon this as an absolutely necessary tool and as a preventive measure, as we do in vaccination. We do not permit a child to get into school without being vaccinated, but we let the child come into the school without a mental test.

*Mr. Murray:* Ladies and gentlemen, in our Ridgewood audience tonight is Mrs. Ethlyn Wisegarver Bott of Belleville, Illinois, who was chosen the American Mother of the Year. Her selection was made by the American Mothers Committee. Mrs. Bott recently returned from Europe, where she studied problems of juvenile delinquency on the continent. Mrs. Bott, would you have a question for our speakers?

*Mrs. Bott:* I would like to ask a question of my good friend, Senator Hennings, from my own home area. First of all, I would like to say that in my opinion grim parenthood is a career and not an avocation. I would like Senator Hennings to agree with me that in many, many cases children who come from homes where parents are very, very busy that they sense the fact that they are not receiving the love that they expect, which naturally breaks down a comradeship between parent and child. Is it not true that we have far too many children who sense the fact that they are not wanted, not even from the beginning? Neither can we buy good youth.

*Mr. Murray:* Do you agree with that, Senator?

*Senator Hennings:* Mrs. Bott, I

might say that I not only agree with it, but what you have just said, and said so well, has been highlighted throughout the course of the hearings that we have been holding for the past two months.

*Mr. Murray:* Do I have another question? The gentleman on the aisle, please.

*Questioner:* This is addressed to Judge Kross. To what extent, Judge Kross, is the fact that the modern father has a minimum of contact with his children become a factor in juvenile delinquency?

*Judge Kross:* In my opinion, it plays a great part, and I think that that is one of the things that organizations such as the Y can overcome. The development of resources in the Y that bring in the entire family—father, mother and children—so that there is a bond between the family as a unit, and where the father can play a fundamental role, helps tremendously.

*Questioner:* Senator Hennings, is some juvenile delinquency due to the precept that children must not be punished for fear of making them unhappy? Are not some corrective measures in childhood essential?

*Senator Hennings:* Well, I must say that I disclaim expertness on that question. We do find some diversity of respectable opinion. We have had people who come before this committee, who have been screened and who by experience and background presumably should know something about this problem, who seem to feel that the only cure is to throw them into a reformatory or behind the wall somewhere, or to take them to the woodshed and give them a good beating, or to visit other terms of pain and punishment upon them, in addition to confinement, and



that that will cure it. But we know that that hasn't cured it throughout the ages. If that method had been successful we would not be discussing this problem tonight, would we?

*Judge Kross:* May I add another statement here. I think it is well for us to stress the fact that there is confusion about what we call discipline. In the minds of most people, discipline means corporal punishment, deprivation. Discipline, real discipline, is a building of character, a facing of situations. I think when one recognizes that, you'd find that the thing that you call corrective would take its proper place. No expert in the bringing up of young people would say that there are no needs at all for any corrective measures, but what those corrective measures are is the question.

*Mr. Murray:* Do I hear another question? Another hand raised? A gentleman, please.

*Questioner:* My question is addressed to Commissioner Kross. School and home relationship have a direct bearing on prevention of juvenile delinquency. How can a more co-operative relationship be developed between parents and school—other than through the P.T.A.?

*Judge Kross:* That is another one of my pet theories, that I believe our trouble lies in thinking the school is just a process that begins in some neighborhoods at six, some at five years, up to 16 or 17 depending upon the geography of the place. But when we can envisage school as a process from the cradle to the grave, the schools and character building agencies and churches will co-operate to make it a unified process which will also include leisure

time. We all forget that we have so much time. Someone says people haven't enough time for their children. I think one of the troubles is that we all now have more time than we know what to do with in the proper way, and if we could think of a program of schooling from A to Z, or from the cradle to the grave, I think we would solve the problem as you see it.

*Questioner:* Senator Hennings, do you think that the prospect of entering military service contributes to juvenile delinquency?

*Senator Hennings:* Well, I would like to ask you that question (*laughter*) if I could. It may, in many instances, and my best guess would be that it doubtless does. Anything that tends to breed insecurity and anxiety and uncertainty in our population, young people and old people both, does create tension, and by the same token people do get into trouble and difficulties.

*Mr. Murray:* I think we may have time for one more question. The young lady on my left.

*Questioner:* In my psychology class we are studying the comic books and the effect they have on young people. Do you think it has an effect on juvenile delinquency; do you think it is a cause of it?

*Judge Kross:* What book?

*Questioner:* Comic books.

*Judge Kross:* Oh, the comic books. You looked at me and I assumed that you wanted me to answer it.

*Questioner:* Yes.

*Judge Kross:* Well I don't believe a comic book, as such, does the damage; it is the surroundings

under which the comic book is read and the place it plays in the entire program. That's my answer to you.

*Questioner:* Thank you.

*Mr. Murray:* Thank you very much, Commissioner Kross and Senator Hennings. I am most sorry that we have to interrupt, but our time has expired. We appreciate

your most interesting discussion tonight.

We extend our thanks to our hosts for this program: William A. Worthman, General Secretary of the Ridgewood Y.M.C.A.; and the officials of the National Council, especially John R. Burkhart, Public Relations Director, and Henriette K. Harrison, Radio Consultant.



## FOR FURTHER STUDY OF THIS WEEK'S TOPIC

### Background Questions

#### JUVENILE DELINQUENCY—A DEFINITION

1. What is juvenile delinquency?
  - a. Is it a legal concept covering criminal behavior of youthful offenders?
  - b. Or, is it a moral concept describing any unethical behavior?
2. What age group does "juvenile" refer to? e.g., children, adolescents, anyone below voting age?
3. Does the term "juvenile delinquency" refer to any specific class of crimes?
  - a. Does it preclude hardened criminality?
  - b. Or, does it refer solely to delinquency within a certain age group?
4. Has juvenile delinquency been increasing or decreasing?

#### JUVENILE DELINQUENCY—CAUSES

1. Does heredity play any part in juvenile delinquency? Or, is it a purely environmental phenomenon?
2. How early does delinquent behavior manifest itself? Are our criminals getting younger?
3. To what extent are family tensions responsible for juvenile delinquency?
  - a. Is the contention that parents, not children, are delinquent correct? Is it fair?
  - b. Have parents failed in providing the proper emotional environment or the example of good behavior for their children?
  - c. Has the increase in the number of working mothers and "latchkey kids" influenced juvenile delinquency trends?
  - d. What effect has the wartime absence of fathers on the emotional character of American family life?

- e. Are juvenile delinquents generally "rejected" children? Do they come from homes where they are, as a rule, harshly disciplined? coddled and over-protected? ignored?
- f. How has the incidence of broken homes (divorces, separations) affected the stability of our youth?
4. Have our schools been successfully detecting and rehabilitating the incipient delinquent?
  - a. Is the contention that most of the energies of teachers, school administrators, today, is spent in maintaining order and discipline, correct?
  - b. Has the incidence of truancy increased within recent years? Is truancy a good indicator of potential delinquency?
5. To what extent is the community responsible for juvenile delinquency?
  - a. Has there been a breakdown of general morality? Are we guilty of civic laxness? Is there a basic conflict in our values today?
  - b. How do frequent evidences of public immorality affect our youth?
6. Does the prospect of continuing world tension fill today's youth with a sense of helplessness, a loss of control over personal destiny?
7. Is juvenile delinquency more prevalent in some economic and social groups than in others?
  - a. Is the popular connection between poverty, slums and delinquency valid? Or, are certain types of delinquency found more often in low-income areas?
  - b. Is it true that more delinquents are coming from middle and high-income groups?
8. Is there any connection between minority group status and delinquency?
9. Is there any connection between lack of active religious affiliation and delinquency?
10. Has the character of juvenile delinquency changed within recent decades?
  - a. Has the use of narcotics by young people increased?
  - b. How do the following influence the incidence of juvenile delinquency—mental illness, drinking, comic books, movies, radio and television?
  - c. What factors explain the reported increase in vandalism? in teen-age gang fights?
  - d. Have juvenile crimes become more destructive in nature? If yes, why?
  - e. Has there been an increase in the number of juveniles accused of sex offenses?

## JUVENILE DELINQUENCY—CURES

1. Are there, as yet, any intensive plans in operation for combating juvenile delinquency on a steady basis?
2. Is the local community primarily responsible for handling this problem? Or, is local gov't too small to cope adequately with it?



3. With what aspect of juvenile delinquency is the federal government directly concerned? What has the federal gov't been doing in this field? What further action could you suggest?
4. What institutions—police, courts, family, church, social agencies—are primarily concerned with combating juvenile crime? Or, must all of them contribute to a solution of this problem?
5. Are our courts (children's, family, domestic relations, etc.) functioning effectively in a coordinated manner?
  - a. Are they adequately staffed? If not, should we be training more people for this work?
  - b. How can we improve our probation and parole programs?
6. Are our reformatories, detention homes, etc., charged with the responsibility of rehabilitating delinquent youth, doing a successful job? If not, what can be done to improve their effectiveness?
7. Is there such a thing as a hardened juvenile criminal? If so, is there need for a reappraisal of our methods of dealing with them?
  - a. Can we rule out punishment as a method of curbing delinquency?
  - b. Or, is a treatment approach, which makes full use of psychiatric and social work agencies in the community, preferable?
  - c. Are our social facilities too meager to do an adequate job in view of the scope of this problem?
  - d. Are punishment and treatment necessarily mutually exclusive methods of dealing with the juvenile delinquent?
8. Is there any such thing as a hopeless delinquent?



## THE SPEAKERS' COLUMN

(Continued from page 2)

social rather than criminal, Judge Kross organized the Magistrate Court's Social Service Bureau in 1936—a voluntary agency attached to the Court which provided social aid to persons brought to the Courts in cases where probation service was not available.

She organized the Wayward Minors Court for girls 16-21, now called "Girls Term," one of the first socialized courts in New York City to handle exclusively problems of adolescent female delinquents.

In 1943, she did an intensive piece of Crime Prevention work as chairman of the Department of Crime, Delinquency and Social Adjustment of the New York State Federation of Women's Clubs, later launched the Youth Conservation program of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, which has been received with great acclaim and is being implemented by many local women's clubs all over the country.

Judge Kross has recently been appointed Commissioner of Correction, and is now in charge of the city's prisons and has an ex officio place on the Parole Board.



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